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TOPICS FOR POSSIBLE RADIO BROADCASTS

1946

Rural Electrification Administration
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, 25, D. C.

NEW POWER LINES...FARMSTEAD WIRING...EQUIPMENT. These will make top rural electrification news for farmers in 1946. REA borrowers will push construction of new rural power lines as rapidly as supplies of materials and manpower permit. Farmers will of course be interested in their plans. They will be concerned with the problems of getting their farms wired...with buying electrical equipment as it becomes available...with using electricity profitably. As in former years, the spotlight will be on what the man down the road is doing with his electricity...and on how well his methods pay. Also important from the farm service angle: programs which point out some of the new opportunities opening up as electric power becomes available...opportunities in specialized production, in farm processing and in small rural industries such as have been growing up all over the country in electrified areas. Suggestions for localized radio broadcasts on these topics follow. The arrangement by months is tentative. In some instances it may be advisable to schedule a topic under a different month; in others it may seem wise to cancel a topic completely and replace it with a substitute from the topics at the end of this list.

J A N U A R Y

Farm Electrification Outlook, 1946: Lead-off program to answer some of the questions farmers are asking about whether they can expect electric service in 1946 -- how many farms can be served, what steps are being taken to reach farms on back roads "off the highlines" and what is being done locally to meet shortages of poles and other materials and shortages of labor. Broadcast might include summary of plans for extending electric service in state and nation, should also answer the question, "What should I do to get electricity?" A director, manager or other representative of the local co-op can give authoritative answers.

Cut Loose from Brooder Worries: Report from a poultry raiser whose electric brooders have done away with innumerable day and night trips to the brooder house for fueling, checking temperatures, guarding against fire hazards. Of special interest: time and labor saved, per cent of chicks lost, how soon the chicks feather out, absence of crowding, costs. Since electric brooders are most successful in otherwise unheated houses, the "how" of electric brooding is also important. A representative of the co-op might round out the broadcast by telling what other poultry raisers in the area are doing with electric brooders and what electric brooding has meant to poultry raising throughout the section. In addition he might also answer questions on types of brooders -- home-made bulb brooders, home-made brooders with heating elements and thermostats, commercial types of equipment.

F E B R U A R Y

Save the Bacon: For sections where cold weather cuts into pig profits. Figures show that farmers lose up to 3 out of every 10 pigs farrowed alive. Losses are largely due to chilling or to crushing as the young pigs crowd near the sow for warmth. Home-made pig brooders--ordinary shelters heated by electric light bulbs--practically eliminate these losses. Story might be presented by farmer who has pig brooder success story to tell...about how and why he made his brooders, weather and housing conditions under which they were used, results, special tips on using pig brooders and of course costs. Co-op manager should be able to sketch in community story on number of pig brooders in use, instances of outstanding pig brooder results; could also offer free plans available through REA. (Possible tie-in with feed situation: USDA says pig farrowed dead represents loss of 140 pounds of feed, each pig farrowed alive, but dying at weaning time -- 10 weeks -- costs 120 pounds of feed more.)

Wiring Today for Tomorrow: A "must" for '46. Here's the story in a nutshell. How much help a farmer gets from electricity depends on how his farm is wired...whether outlets are where they are needed...switches are where they are most convenient...whether wiring is heavy enough for the load it must carry...whether it has reserve capacity to handle extra equipment he may want to add later on. Light, skimpy wiring (besides presenting a fire hazard) wastes electricity and cuts down on the operating efficiency of the equipment used. A good broadcast can be built around the experience of a farmer who is getting satisfactory use from a good wiring job installed several years ago. Or an equally effective program might be pegged to the experience of a farmer who had to re-wire because someone sold him on a "cheap" initial installation. A co-op wiring inspector, manager or someone

else familiar with proper wiring procedure should be present to point up some of the points to keep in mind in getting a good wiring job. (Such as planning, use of approved materials, provision for a load center, hiring of qualified electrician, inspection of the completed system.) A good angle: number of farms in co-op area that will get electric service within the next few months.

M A R C H

Farm Shops Keep 'Em Rolling: War times proved the value of well-equipped, electrified farm repair shops...for saving trips to town for repairs, keeping equipment in good order, for turning salvaged parts into valuable farm wagons, trailers, electric elevators and other equipment. Chances are there's a good story in your section about a farmer who makes many of his own repairs---and even helps out his neighbors---in an electrified shop. Besides sketching his own experience, the farmer should be able to join in a discussion with a representative of the co-op -- the manager, a director or well-informed member -- as to just how a good farm shop should be arranged and equipped. A good chance to highlight farm tools including the popular electric welder.

Hazards You Can Do Without: Most electrical accidents occur because farmers are not yet thoroughly acquainted with electricity...a tool which in 1946 is still relatively new on most farms. So there's a big place for a program which underlines some of the things you can't do safely with electricity.

Among hazards any farm family can "do without" are: amateur wiring and installations put in use without inspection...home-made electric fence controllers...improperly grounded electric water systems, milkers, etc.,...switches, fixtures or electric equipment within reach of bathtub...cords over nails, through doorways and under rugs.

A co-op wiring inspector, manager or some other representative who knows electric wiring could present this program; might arrange for a farmer who has had a near-accident to tell his story on the broadcast.

A P R I L

Haying -- Weather or Not: In other words -- hay drying. It's new and farmers are interested. So how about rounding up one or two farmers who used electrically-powered hay drying equipment last year...putting them

on with a co-op manager who has helped with these installations... Program could cover the whole story from A to Z --- cost and methods of installation...method of putting up hay...quality of hay cured... feed value...crops saved under unfavorable weather conditions... costs as compared with results. Could be pegged to haying season, but an early broadcast would give interested farmers time to put in their own installations this season.

Garden Watering: The story here is that electric water systems have put rural gardens...and truck acreages...on a new, high-paying basis. Increases in yield of from 2 to 10 times are reported from Georgia; similar increases from other parts of the country. This will make a good farm broadcast if based on a first-hand report from a farmer who has increased his profits by irrigating his garden. A representative of the co-op can sketch in the community story, contribute to a discussion of methods...capacity of water system needed...costs as compared with increased yields.

M A Y

Cold Makes It Hot for Bacteria: Catch-line for a good broadcast on milk cooling. Let's hitch it to a farm success story...the kind which will point up production of Grade A whole milk as a means of boosting farm income on electrified farms. Again a representative of the co-op...probably the manager...could add to the program by citing the increase in whole milk production throughout the area since electricity has become available...by joining in a discussion of cooling equipment, costs and methods. Discussion might cover wet storage (tank-type coolers)...aerators..."reach-in" storage boxes..."walk-in" coolers...advantages of each. Program should of course bring out importance of keeping down bacteria count by quick cooling and proper storage of milk.

What's New in Electric Equipment: Report of developments in the electrical equipment field -- as to new types of electrical equipmentimprovements in existing types of equipment...in new lines of research. Ideal approach would be quick summary of what electricity can do on modern farm, pointing up newer applications (such as barn curing hay, food freezing and storage, use of artificial light,etc.) and touching upon some of the more unique lines of research. A co-op representative might be interviewed along these lines, using a script based on information from REA. (REA is constantly in touch with inventors, research men, manufacturers and others in the equipment field for whom it has become a clearing house for information of this kind).

J U N E

Winter Made to Order: A broadcast on farm freezers. Should rate A-1 in most farm communities. Best bet, an interview report from one or two farmers as to their experience with farm freezers. (Farmer who uses freezer equipment for marketing poultry, small fruit or even vegetables could tell an especially interesting story.) Co-op manager could help out in covering types of equipment available... capacity needed on average farm.

Water When You Need It: Starring the electric water system. Start this one out with a report from a farmer who did away with pumping and carrying water by hand by installing a well-planned farmstead water system. Follow up with a roundup of practical points for any farmer to consider in planning a water system installation which will meet the special requirements of his farm. Co-op manager could cite experience of other farmers in the area in this part of the discussion; county agent might also contribute to the program if time permitted. REA has a free leaflet which might be offered: "Planning Your Farm Water System".

J U L Y

Fences on the Move: Of course we mean electric fences -- one, two and three-wire fences which can be put up almost as easily as you can string a clothes line. Program should explain how electric fences work... warn against using home-made controllers or connecting up a fence to a source of current without using a controller. Farmer can carry the ball with an account of his own experience with electric fence. Labor saving is a top item, of course, but the way its use as temporary fence ties in with good farming practices (such as pasture rotation, contouring, "hogging down" crops, etc.) is also important.

Jobs from Rural Electrification: Here's a top-notch tie-in on the theme, "That's good for the farmer is good for everybody." Building power lines to more farms not only means more construction jobs, but also jobs in maintenance...wiring...appliance sales and appliance maintenance. (Indirectly it means jobs in mines and factories, on railroads and in offices). It's business -- the kind that makes the wheels go round for everybody. Good way to bring this out would be an interview-discussion with:

An ex-G.I., newly-hired by the local co-op to help with construction or maintenance. Let him tell about his own job...his own setup and about what jobs opened up on rural communities by rural electrification will mean to returning servicemen in general.

Representative of rural electric cooperative who can sketch in employment opportunities which will probably be opened up by the co-op's construction program.

A man who expects to open an appliance business or a man who has made a start as a wiring contractor -- someone who can underline the employment and business which follow as indirect results of rural electrification.

A U G U S T

Fresh Air Pays Off: Do milk cows like fresh air? Apparently they do, because experiments show that proper ventilation will increase the milk flow of a good dairy cow all the way from 10 to 200 pounds of milk per month. How about inviting a farmer who installed electric ventilating fans in his dairy barn not so long ago to pass along some of the things he's learned from his own experience? A co-op manager or utilization man...or a ventilating engineer if one is available...should be on hand to answer some of the more technical questions, possibly to report on other ventilating fan installations in the area.

Power by Pulling Together: Nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ million rural consumers have received electric service in the last ten years from REA-financed systems---most of them by organizing and operating their own rural electric associations. They have borrowed more than a half billion dollars from the government; are paying it back with interest...on time and ahead of time...Together, these systems are operating some 445,000 miles of rural power line in 46 states, Alaska and the Virgin Islands. In other words -- big business run by rural people. What have they done in your area? How do they operate? Farmer-directors of one of the rural electric cooperatives in your area could give some interesting answers along these lines for a good local broadcast.

S E P T E M B E R

Keeping Summer in the Hen House: After September, it won't be long until cold weather and shorter days start chiseling in on profits from the egg basket. So it should be a good time to remind farm folks that lights in the laying house will help bring laying flocks into production earlier...more fall and winter eggs; also that warming poultry water so it won't freeze over pays off in egg production. (It takes a lot of water to make an egg). Top billing again might go to a farmer -- one who has a poultry success story to tell, in

which use of laying house lights and poultry water warmers play a prominent part. Community story and technical angle might be covered by representative of the co-op.

Industry, RFD: In most sections, it's pretty new...but it's important...So you'll want to call attention to small rural industries in your area --what they are...how they came to be started...how electric service cleared the way for their establishment...what they mean to the community as a whole. (In terms of extra employment...new markets for local products...new sources of supply for such essential items as feed, fertilizer, etc.) The owner-operator of a small industry "on the RFD" can tell his part of the story. A representative of the co-op can report on other industries; share in a discussion of similar opportunities which will be opened up as electric power is made available in more rural sections.

O C T O B E R . . .

On the Safe Side With Electricity: Important. We mean the job of educating farmers as to what they can and can't do with safety around high voltage lines. Among points to be made are the need for caution in moving buildings and equipment under the highline, special precautions when pulling pipe from a well, and above all, common-sense warnings about climbing a highline pole to "fix something". (Which is frequently fatal.) Facts can be brought out in an interview with a spokesman for the co-op -- a director, manager or line foreman. If a local farmer who has narrowly escaped injury along a high voltage line can be persuaded to appear on the program, his experience would point up the broadcast. (Note: This program should cover highline safety as distinguished from farm safety, suggested for an earlier broadcast.)

Winterizing Water Systems: This time we're thinking about pressure water systems. There are a lot of them; many so new that this will be their first winter. A few timely suggestions for taking care of leaks...making the pumphouse weather tight...protecting exposed points with straw...replacing heavy oil with lighter lubricant in sections where the weather is severe...will help keep these water systems on the job after cold weather arrives. A local man who specializes in farm water system installations and repairs might appear on this program along with someone from the co-op who can tell about the increasing use of electric water systems in the area. Or a farmer who has had a season or two of experience with winterizing a water system might appear in place of the repairman. In this case the broadcast might point up the added importance of having running water when it's 10 below and snow drifts between the house and the barn lay 4 feet deep.

NOVEMBER

Stock Tank Heating the Electric Way: Another good pre-cold weather broadcast. Farmers know that when water tanks freeze over it costs them money. Milk production goes down; meat animals gain less rapidly. Electric tank heaters, of course, will take over the job of keeping tanks open ...do it automatically all winter long for only a few dollars. It shouldn't be hard to find a farmer who has an interesting story to tell along this line. He, with a representative of the co-op, and the radio farm director, can cover the "ins" and "outs" of electric water heating, ...including size and location of tank, type of heaters, methods of insulating and covering the tanks so they can be heated most economically.

Electric Grinding -- A New Twist to an Old Job: The "new twist" is use of small electrically-powered hammer or burr mills to grind feed automatically on the farm. Overhead bins and automatic shutoff devices make it possible to handle the grinding job while the farmer goes on about other work. Proof of the pudding, of course, is the eating... which means a good, "over-the-line-fence" interview with a farmer-member of the co-op who has tried it out. Chances are you'll find that on-the-farm grinding has boosted his profits from livestock, possibly even changed his scheme of farming. REA can provide additional facts on equipment, etc., for a co-op representative to present, in order to round out the program.

DECEMBER

Making Motors Work: And we mean really work. Not just one job for every motor, but several. For small motors, the trick lies in a home-made mount arrangement which can be put on any fractional horsepower motor, makes it possible to shift the same motor from job to job almost as fast as you can change belts. A home-made cart for "toting" heavier motors from place to place makes the same thing possible for motors of more than one horsepower. (REA has free plans for making a motor portable; also for making a motor cart and for building a home-made motor table on which several pieces of equipment -- tool grinder, buffer, sausage grinder, churn, etc. -- may be used interchangeably, all driven by the same motor.) Broadcast might open with a report from a farmer who makes particularly good use of electric motors, preferably a man who shifts his motors from job to job with the aid of some of the home-made devices described above. A representative of the rural electric cooperative in the area might share in the discussion of how motors can be made portable, how they can be used to better advantage on local farms. An alternative: a straight how-to-do-it program by the co-op representative and radio farm director offering the free plans mentioned above.

Rural Electrification Roundup: Time out to look back over some of the farm electrification gains in 1946. How many farms received electric service? What kind of record have rural electric co-ops made? Have wiring installations kept up with the demand. Have farmers been able to get equipment and what is the equipment outlook for 1947? Have the shortages of materials and labor eased up? A co-op representative -- with a little help from REA -- could give some interesting answers to these questions, particularly someone who is in touch with the state-wide situation.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

(Note: In addition to the above, a number of good programs might be built around special lines of production or special practices important in your section. Top billing in each case probably should go to a farmer who has used electricity with outstanding success. A representative of the co-op would be the best bet for filling in background about other farmers in the section who are using electricity for similar purposes and for helping out in a discussion of methods and equipment).

Tobacco Growing: Spotlight might be on use of so-called daylight lamps to permit accurate grading at all hours of the day or night. Also important: electric hotbeds as a means of controlling blue mould; electric fans and stokers as aids at curing time.

In Potato Country: Top item here is convenient, economical power for potato graders, although potato conveyors, loaders and ventilating fans also have their innings. All in all, this topic should be good for a strong program...especially if it's made the occasion for putting local farm success story on the air.

And the Sheep Raiser: By all means -- if you're in sheep raising country -- let the sheep raiser have his say. He'll want to talk about electric clippers and what they save in time and money at shearing time... the effectiveness of floodlights in the sheep yard to keep predators away and keep the sheep from getting excited...the year-round value of electric water systems and electric feed grinding equipment. Still new enough in some sections to be mighty interesting are the various forms of home-made electric "lamb-brooders"...bulb-heater shelters, effective in drying off newly-born lambs and warming orphan lambs.

Sweet Potato Growers: For a spring program, tie in with electric hotbeds; for fall, with electrically heated curing and storage houses. Curing houses of one kind or another have stretched the sweet potato season from a few weeks...as it used to be...to several months; have swelled the sweet potato grower's market considerably. Looks as if electric curing houses with their automatic "fool-proof" temperature control might extend the market for sweet potatoes still further.

Irrigation: Lots of possibilities here. Maybe a broadcast pointing up the way in which electric pumping and sprinkler irrigation have brought rolling, arid land into cultivation. Maybe a program pointing up the labor saving made possible by switching from ditch irrigation to electric pumping. Or perhaps a report underlining the practical advantages of electric pumping---economy, dependability, elimination of need for full-time maintenance man.

Electricity Works in the Dairy: This always makes a top-notch program... because nowdays on a modern dairy electricity does everything but make the milk. Best kind of broadcast, of course, is the one which shows other farmers how they can increase in their own dairies and produce higher quality milk at lower cost...or which points up new opportunities in production of Grade A milk wherever electric service is available.

We Make Poultry Pay: A topic which should interest a lot of people. Wherever the highline goes, poultry gets a new lease on life. Reason No. 1: labor saving equipment such as electric brooders and water systems which make it possible to double and triple poultry production with little or no more labor. Reason No. 2: equipment such as lights and poultry water warmers which increase production. A good broadcast should wake up folks to what they can do with poultry once their farms are electrified.

TOPICS FOR SPECIAL FEATURES AND COMMUNITY BROADCASTS

And finally -- four special topics...worth a little extra work for special farm broadcasts or as special events broadcasts. Here they are:

How We're Meeting the Wiring Problem: Chances are your section does have a wiring problem...rural families with electricity at their front door, still using kerosene lamps because they can't find competent electricians to wire their farms. If so, what's being done to meet this situation might make an interesting story. One of the farmers who is waiting for a wiring contractor...someone who is helping with the wiring job...and a representative of the co-op who is in touch with the whole situation might cover the story nicely. (Be on the lookout for special angles: in one community an 18-year-old is working her way through college wiring farms. North Dakota is working on a program for interesting returning servicemen in wiring work and providing short course training at the state agricultural college.) You may want to point out, too, that co-op's are protecting farmers by requiring that newly-installed wiring be passed by approved inspectors before it is put into use.

Now We Have Electricity: There's more in this title than first meets the eye. How power lines are laid out during the next two or three years will have an important bearing on how many of the rural families in sparsely settled districts...back away from the main roads...are able to get electric service.

Building lines only to farms which are close together and readily accessible results in high profit lines -- but it leaves "orphan" farms without service and with little chance of getting electricity in the future. That, in a nutshell, is the reason for the area coverage plan followed by rural electric cooperatives... a principle under which lines are laid out to serve both the farms which are close together and those in thinly populated districts. Looks like a complicated story, but it can be told in an interesting way by putting on one of the farmers from a "thin" area who already has electric service... a second farmer from a "thin" area who is yet to be served and a co-op manager -- all to discuss area coverage as a means of making it possible for more farms in the area to get electric service. With local facts, figures, cases and persons, this can be an outstanding program.

Back Home to Power Farming: There's an ex-G.I. in your area who has come back to the farm with a lot of ideas and enthusiasm. He's looking forward to farming -- but not as his dad farmed. And he's looking forward to having his wife and family to come enjoy a farm home -- but not the kind of farm home his mother worked in. This farm will be a machine-run farm...his home will have modern conveniences...with electricity, of course. Some of the co-op people in your area should be able to put you in touch with just the G.I. to interview -- someone who has plans and ideas about using electricity. There will be others like him in the community...so someone from the co-op can tell about them...maybe discuss with the young man interviewed some of the things he can do with electricity on his farm.

Prosperity Follows the Highlines: Here's one which should make the whole population prick up its ears...townspeople and all. What happens when a rural electric cooperative comes to a community? First there's a payroll and jobs while the line is built...more jobs and more payroll as the co-op goes into operation. Then money is spent for wiring, for electric appliances and equipment, for plumbing. As electricity is put to work on the farm and in the community, farm profits increase ...cash registers in town jingle more frequently...businesses like creameries, cheese factories, hatcheries, poultry processing plants, etc., are established...all in the wake of farm electrification. Cue for a good broadcast, of course, lies in a roundup of all these benefits, direct and indirect. For a balanced program, consider putting on a farmer who can tell how electricity has increased his profits, a business man (maybe the head of the Commerical Club or the local Chamber of Commerce) who can report on increased business activity as felt by local merchants, a representative of the co-op who can cite figures on what the cooperative has spent in the community. (REA can give you some special help on this one if the idea appeals to you.)

